



United States
Department of
Agriculture

Animal and
Plant Health
Inspection
Service

FY 2006

WILDLIFE SERVICES—NEW JERSEY

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USDA Resolves Wildlife Conflicts in New Jersey

Every day, residents, industries, organizations and agencies call on New Jersey Wildlife Services (WS) for help in protecting agriculture, human health and safety, natural resources, and property from damage or threats posed by wildlife. WS' professional wildlife biologists respond with effective, selective, and humane strategies to resolve wildlife conflicts. New Jersey's diverse ecological mix of urban and suburban settings and agricultural, forested, and coastal environments provides wildlife habitats amongst the nation's highest human population density.

WS works to protect human health and property at airports, schools, parks, recreation areas, and other locations throughout the State. It protects agricultural resources from crop depredation, and guards natural resources, such as wetlands, from wildlife damage. WS personnel also educate the public about wildlife and wildlife damage management. Specific projects conducted by New Jersey WS include, protecting rare and threatened birds from predation; conducting sampling and monitoring for wild-

life-borne disease; managing damage caused by waterfowl, blackbirds, and other wildlife; and reducing wildlife-related safety hazards at airports.

Applying Science & Expertise to Wildlife Challenges

WS offers information, advice, equipment, and materials that enable many people to resolve wildlife conflicts on their own. Often, this *technical assistance* can be provided over the phone. WS also provides on-site expertise, or *direct assistance*, to manage complex wildlife problems that cannot be safely resolved by others. To support this effort, WS conducts *scientific research* across the Nation to develop answers to new problems posed by wildlife and to ensure WS services benefit from the latest science and technology.

Protecting Agricultural Crops from Bird Damage

In the Garden State, this includes Canada geese damage to pasture, berries, grains, vegetables, and sod; black and turkey vultures damage to livestock; and blackbird damage at dairies. WS assists farmers to acquire permits and provides guidance on use and effectiveness of harassment, farming practices modifications, and habitat adjustments. WS plays an active role in the State's Department of Agriculture Wildlife Working Group and Animal Emergency Working Group.

Protecting Dairies and Feedlots—WS helps reduce blackbird and starling damage at dairies and feedlots coordinated with local officials, farmers, State agencies, and Rutgers Cooperative Extension. Aid includes technical assistance, such as recommendations for exclusion and cultural practice modification, or direct assistance, such as harassment, trapping, and population management.

Protecting Health and Safety

Protection of human health and safety from wildlife damage and threats is the largest component of WS in New Jersey. Technical and operational



assistance focuses on management of wildlife hazards to aviation and Canada goose damage, and to monitoring and surveillance related to wildlife-borne diseases.

Protecting Human Health and Safety at Airports—Wildlife/aircraft strikes cost \$650 million in damage to U.S. civil and military aviation annually. In New Jersey, many wildlife species are increasing in abundance and distribution, and pose unacceptable safety hazards at airports. Statewide, WS biologists assist airports with wildlife hazard management training, conduct on-airport wildlife management consultations, develop wildlife hazard assessments and management plans, and implement programs to protect public and aviation safety.

WS has conducted an integrated wildlife hazard management program at Atlantic City International Airport (ACY) since 1989. Stationed at ACY, WS staff trains airport personnel and wildlife hazard management patrols, develops and monitors the mowing plan, collects and manages bird strike information, conducts T&E species monitoring, and assists the airport in FAA compliance and in permit acquisition. The partnership ensures rare species are not harmed. WS also monitors bird hazards associated with waste management activities.

Protecting Human Health and Safety from

Canada Geese—New Jersey supports the greatest density of resident Canada geese on the East Coast, estimated at 104,360 birds.

Top 5 Major Assistance Activities:

- Protecting property and public health and safety from damage associated with Canada geese
- Protecting civil and military aviation from wildlife strikes
- Managing agricultural damage caused by blackbirds, and starlings
- Protecting rare, threatened and endangered birds from predation
- Partnering with other agencies to monitor wildlife diseases and evaluating management programs

Top 3 WS Research Projects of Interest to New Jersey:

- Defining and reducing wildlife hazards to aviation
- Evaluating waterfowl as disease, parasite, and noxious weed reservoirs
- Managing wildlife transmission of rabies

People enjoy seeing some geese, but overabundance develops goose feces accumulation, landscape damage by overgrazing, and aggressive geese attacks on people. WS' implementation of Canada goose damage management programs is based on agreements and support from public agencies, law enforcement, and property owners. Each year, WS assists more than 400 New Jersey residents with goose-related problems through technical advice, removal of goose nests to curb aggression, harassment and behavior modification programs, and local population management. In some cases, biological sampling is conducted by WS through partnerships with state agencies and universities, to investigate potential heavy metal contaminants and disease factors and bacterial pathogens, such as salmonella, shigella, and E. coli.

Partnering to Investigate Wildlife Disease Issues—An oral rabies vaccination (ORV) program has been conducted in Cape May County since 1991, the longest continually running ORV program in the Nation. Approximately 330,000 baits containing vaccine have been distributed from the air or by hand; raccoons that eat the baits become vaccinated. Since 2002, WS has partnered to evaluate the program's effectiveness, conducted rabies surveillance in three counties, and, in autumn 2004, conducted a trapping project to obtain biological samples from the raccoon population.

WS is participating in the national surveillance for highly pathogenic H5N1 avian influenza in wild migratory birds, and coordinated a multi-agency partnership among Federal, State and private agencies to collect samples from shorebirds, waterfowl, and the environment. Since 2003, WS cooperated in testing hunter-harvested deer for chronic wasting disease (CWD), a fatal neurological disease in deer and elk. To date, all tests have

been negative, indicating NJ is free of CWD.

Conserving Rare, Threatened and Endangered Birds—New Jersey's 150-mile-long coastline has potential as valuable habitat for threatened and endangered (T&E) shorebirds. Wildlife competition, predation, and suburban shore community development can be detrimental. WS protects the State endangered least tern and piping plover (Federally threatened) at three coastal sites. It coordinates interagency meetings on predation management in order to increase involvement, operational support and enhanced communications for T&E programs. Participation of private organizations with State and Federal agencies will improve programs to ensure continuation of these rare species in New Jersey.

WS biologists at the Atlantic City International Airport conduct T&E species monitoring surveys to identify the number and location of nesting upland sandpipers (State endangered) and grasshopper sparrows (State threatened). The data is used in airport operation decisions and bird hazard management activities, which contributes to species conservation by reduced bird/aircraft strikes involving rare birds.

Protecting Rare Habitats from Depredation—WS conducts management to reduce Canada geese damage on restored wetlands in the New Jersey Meadowlands complex and on rare native wild rice ecosystem on the Maurice River. Integrated goose damage management programs are implemented through partnerships with State agencies, private organizations, and citizens.

Protecting Property—WS New Jersey provides technical recommendations to those experiencing wildlife damage to property and assists in obtaining Federal permits to reduce property damage associated with migratory birds, especially Canada geese, vultures, and gulls. NJ WS biologists demonstrate the use of specialized methods, including pyrotechnics, night-vision equipment, remote-controlled vehicles, and laser devices to detect and harass birds away from damage sites.

Protecting Property from Vulture Damage—Bird surveys indicate increasing State populations of both turkey and black vultures. New Jersey citizens report damage to decks, rooftops, automobiles, and other property due to accumulation of feces and other activities. WS offers technical advice, assists in requirements of the Federal permit process, and implements vulture harassment projects.

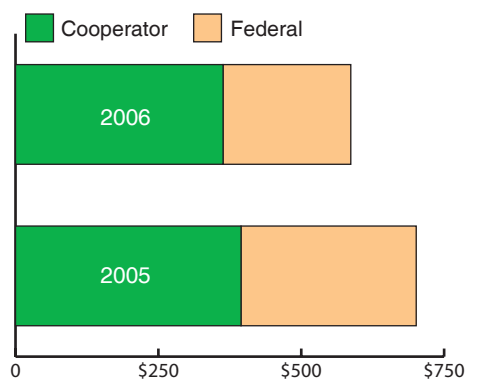
Looking to the Future

While WS provides New Jersey with safe, effective, and humane assistance for a diverse and expanding range of wildlife conflicts, some people continue to experience wildlife damage problems. Assessing wildlife conflicts and implementing appropriate management requires expertise and resources beyond the reach of some citizens. New Jersey's large population of resident Canada geese will pose increased challenges. Similarly, increasing populations of white-tailed deer, gulls, vultures and other species pose growing threats at New Jersey's airports. Public health situations, such as that posed by West Nile virus several years ago, may emerge and challenge wildlife managers and public health officials in the future.

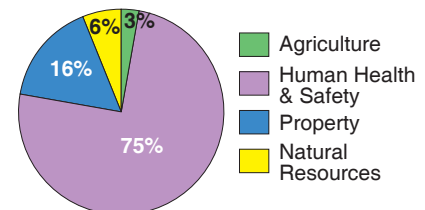
New Jersey Wildlife Services Funding

In addition to receiving federally allocated funds, WS also receives money from cooperators who have a vested interest in the program: producers, airports, private individuals, businesses, and other Federal, State, and Local government agencies. In most cases, these cooperators need help to resolve wildlife damage problems or they play a role in wildlife damage management.

Total Funding (Thousands)



Resources Protected % of Total Funds



Major Cooperators

- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- New Jersey Division of Fish and Wildlife
- Federal Aviation Administration
- U.S. Coast Guard
- New Jersey Departments of Agriculture and of Health and Senior Services
- New Jersey Meadowlands Commission
- Rutgers University
- South Jersey Transportation Authority
- Municipal and County Health Departments

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